

**Opening Statement of Chairman Marsha Blackburn  
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology  
“Reauthorization of the National Telecommunications and Information  
Administration.”  
June 26, 2018**

*(As prepared for delivery)*

Good afternoon and welcome to our hearing on reauthorizing the NTIA. This should be a familiar topic to everyone in the room as NTIA reauthorization was also my first hearing as chair of this subcommittee on February 2<sup>nd</sup> of 2017. Since then, we have held nine hearings related to the work of NTIA, including an oversight hearing this spring with the NTIA Administrator.

I’d like to thank our witnesses for being here. Ms. Hovis has been particularly generous with her time, as this is her third appearance before the subcommittee this Congress on NTIA-related topics. We welcome Mr. Kneuer back to the subcommittee as well, and are pleased to welcome Mr. Gallagher as the fourth former NTIA Administrator we have heard from. We appreciate your perspectives on the agency, and also what music you might have been listening to when the NTIA was last reauthorized. I’ll give you a little hint, it was the year that Miley Cyrus was born.

Make no mistake, the bill before us today is a rural broadband bill, and a very important one at that. Many of us hear over and over again about the desperate need to connect unserved Americans, and we are willing to invest toward that goal, but we must ensure good stewardship of those dollars. We know that without federal involvement, rural areas will continue to be left behind. So the best thing we can do to promote rural broadband is to help the federal government get its act together.

Mr. Tonko and Mr. Lance’s ACCESS BROADBAND Act would establish a new office within NTIA to do exactly that. As we saw at our last markup, it has our strong bipartisan support. There’s just one problem: without giving NTIA the resources it needs to start up and follow through on this new function, our subcommittee’s vision will never be realized.

And the same can be said of our bipartisan consensus that NTIA should be pulling in the latest information across the government to develop an accurate, nationwide

map of broadband service to guide deployment efforts. We first gave NTIA this task in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, and we reaffirmed the priority in RAY BAUM'S Act. Our vision was then enacted in the omnibus, but with funding to get the job started, but more will be needed.

That's why we have targeted our discussion draft so squarely at giving NTIA both the authority and the resources to get to work on these two bipartisan, urgently needed initiatives. And I hope we will be able to move it forward on a bipartisan basis.

Our discussion draft also asserts our leadership and our priorities on other important areas in NTIA's purview, including internet governance, supply chain vulnerabilities, and getting our first responders the very best, most accurate location information when someone calls 911.

Here is the alternative. For 26 years we have funded NTIA without an authorization from this Committee. And every time we fail here, we fail the jurisdiction of this Committee. But with the level of consensus we have here on our vision of NTIA's leadership on rural broadband, that would be a real shame, and I don't intend for it to happen.

At this time, I will yield to the ranking member of the subcommittee, Mr. Doyle, for 5 minutes for an opening statement.